

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-04 FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-06 CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 SCS-02

HEW-02 SCA-01 SWF-01 DRC-01 /086 W
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R 161915Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7919

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 1800

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, AC

SUBJ: ANTIGUA: POSSIBLE GOA REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

PLEASE PASS EX-IMBANK

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. U.K., CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS AND EMBASSY HAVE RECEIVED REQUESTS FROM GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA (GOA) FOR ASSISTANCE IN RE-HABILITATING ISLAND FROM EFFECTS OF LAST WEEK'S EARTHQUAKE.

GOA TELEGRAM TO BRITISH AND CANADIANS LISTED FOLLOWING SHORT-TERM NEEDS (IN ORDER OF PRIORITY): (A) ENGINEERS TO ASSESS DAMAGES AND REPAIR NEEDS; (B) SCAFFOLDING TO SHORE UP DAMAGED BUILDINGS; (C) FENCING MATERIALS; (D) TEMPORARY STEEL BUILDINGS (TO HOUSE OFFICES, ETC.); (E) BUILDING MATERIALS.

GOA TELEGRAM TO EMBASSY WAS BRIEFER THAN REQUESTS TO HMG AND GOC, STATING MERELY THAT SHORT-TERM NEEDS ARE ENGINEERS

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TO ASSESS DAMAGE, STEEL BUILDINGS AND MATERIALS.

2. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FURTHER REPORTS OF DAMAGE FROM BRITISH DEVELOPMENT DIVISION WHICH SENT AN ENGINEER TO ANTIGUA AND FROM STANLEY CONSULTANTS, U.S. ENGINEERING FIRM WHICH HAS BEEN WORKING WITH GOA RE DEEP WATER PORT AND UTILITIES PROJECTS. BRITISH HAVE TERMED GOA ESTIMATE OF US \$50 MILLION DAMAGES AS "VASTLY INFLATED" AND ESTIMATE THAT ACTUAL DAMAGE MAY BE ONLY ONE-TENTH THIS AMOUNT. A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND MAJOR BUILDINGS, SOME WITH CONSIDERABLE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, HAVE BEEN BADLY DAMAGED. AS A RESULT, SOME GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE NOW UNABLE TO OPERATE NORMALLY. TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF PRISON HAS CREATED NEED FOR FACILITIES TO HOUSE INMATES. THERE HAS BEEN SOME DAMAGE TO UTILITIES' TRANSMISSION FACILITIES BUT MOST OF ISLAND SEEMS TO HAVE POWER AND WATER. DEEP WATER HARBOR IS OPERABLE BUT NEEDS AN ESTIMATED US \$1-2 MILLION WORTH OF REPAIRS, INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF CONCRETE WHARF APRON AND FLOODING OF CARGO HANDLING SHEDS. WEST INDIES OIL REFINERY WAS FAIRLY HARD HIT. CRUDE AND OTHER STORAGE TANKS SETTLED SOME TWO TO TEN INCHES AND MANY ARE LEAKING. PIPELINES AND CERTAIN EQUIPMENT WERE ALSO DAMAGED. MANAGER PUTS DAMAGES INTO MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND ESTIMATES THAT 3-6 MONTHS WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE REFINING OPERATIONS WILL BE RESUMED. COMPANY IS ABLE TO CONTINUE ITS BUNKERING AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES.

3. MOST PRESSING PROBLEM IN ANTIGUA APPEARS TO BE DISRUPTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STEMMING FROM DAMAGE TO GOVERNMENT OFFICES. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, QUAKE HAS CAUSED NO LOSS OF LIFE AND FEW INJURIES. ABOUT 80-100 PEOPLE ARE REPORTED TO BE HOMELESS.

4. BRITISH DEVELOPMENT DIVISION STATES THAT HMG WILL ATTEMPT TO MEET NEEDS FOR ENGINEERS, SCAFFOLDING AND TEMPORARY BUILDINGS, INCLUDING FACILITIES FOR PRISONERS. CANADIANS SAY THEY WILL ALSO TRY TO ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT ENGINEERING TALENT IS AVAILABLE TO GOA AND THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO HELP IN OTHER AREAS. CDB PRESIDENT DEMAS AND BANK'S ENGINEER HAVE MADE ON SITE INSPECTION OF DAMAGE AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT DEMAS WILL RAISE ANTIGUA RELIEF AT CDB REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING SLATED FOR OCTOBER 17, AND THAT CDB WILL MOVE TO COORDINATE ANY ASSISTANCE.

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5. STANLEY CONSULTANTS INFORM EMBASSY THAT GOA UTILITIES AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN DONALD HALSTEAD PLANS TO VISIT U.S. LATE THIS MONTH TO MEET EX-IM OFFICIALS. HALSTEAD WILL GIVE REPORT ON QUAKE DAMAGE AND WILL LIKELY REQUEST ANOTHER RESCHEDULING OF PAYMENTS ON EX-IM GUARANTEES FOR DESALINIZATION PLANT AND GENERATOR. HALSTEAD WILL ALSO VISIT AQUA-CHEM IN MILWAUKEE WITH VIEW TO OBTAINING EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO PLACE

DESALINIZATION PLANT BACK IN OPERATION (PLANT WAS INOPERATIVE AT TIME QUAKE OCCURRED). END UNCLASSIFIED

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6. EMBASSY COMMENT: NO ONE CAN DENY THAT ANTIGUA WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE ESCAPED SO LIGHTLY FROM SUCH A SEVERE EARTHQUAKE. NO LIVES HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN LOST; THERE HAVE BEEN FEW INJURIES AND NUMBER OF HOMELESS IS RELATIVELY SMALL. NEVERTHELESS, LOSS OF MANY PUBLIC BUILDINGS, SOME OF WHICH, SUCH AS ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, ARE HISTORIC TREASURES, IS HARD BLOW TO ANTIGUA. ISLAND'S TINY ECONOMY HAS BEEN SEVERELY STRAINED FOR PAST SEVERAL YEARS. LOSS OF SUGAR INDUSTRY TWO YEARS AGO AND RECENT DECLINE IN TOURISM HAVE SPELLED HARD TIMES FOR GOA AND FOR MOST OF ISLAND'S 70,000 POPULATION. ISLAND WILL BE HARD-PRESSED TO GARNER RESOURCES NEEDED FOR REHABILITATION EFFORT. BRITISH EXPECT TO MAKE REASONABLE VIGOROUS EFFORT TO ASSIST. (ACCORDING TO CANADIANS, HMG MAY TAKE THIS OCCASION TO EXTEND FUNDS TO GOA FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BADLY NEEDED CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING TO HOUSE PRINCIPAL MINISTRIES) AND BRITISH HAVE COMMENTED THAT U.S. (EX-IM) INVOLVEMENT IN DEEP WATER PORT PROJECT MAKES IT LOGICAL FOR USG TO EXTEND SOME SORT OF ASSISTANCE TO RESTORE PORT TO NORMAL. WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT INSURANCE IS LIKELY TO COVER AT LEAST PORTION OF REPAIRS AND THAT WE DO NOT YET HAVE FIRM REPORT OF DAMAGE, NOR ANY SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FOR PORT RESTORATION FROM GOA.

7. WE RECOGNIZE THAT ANTIGUA EARTHQUAKE NOT IN SAME DISASTER LEAGUE AS HONDURAS HURRICANE. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THAT TO DO NOTHING AT ALL WOULD RUN COUNTER TO OUR EFFORTS TO CREATE IMAGE OF US AS HELPFUL AND CONCERNED NEIGHBOR. VERY LIKELY, HMG WILL MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION AND GOC, TOO, EXPECTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BY HELPFUL. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSPICUOUS LACK OF US HELP WOULD CERTAINLY GIVE RISE TO UNFAVORABLE COMMENT AND, QUITE POSSIBLY, INFLUENCE GOA TO TAKE HARDER LINE WHEN BASE RIGHTS COME UP FOR NEGOTIATION. WE ARE NOT AWARE, HOWEVER, WHETHER ANY FUNDS AVAILABLE AND UNTIL WE KNOW MORE ABOUT EXTENT OF DAMAGE AND GOA NEEDS, WE ARE NOT PREPARED MAKE DETAILED RECOMMENDATION AS TO HOW FUNDS, IF AVAILABLE, MIGHT BE SPENT.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT ADVISE US: (A) WHETHER FUNDS COULD BE FOUND FOR ASSISTANCE TO GOA, (B) IF SO, AMOUNT THEREOF; AND (C) ANY RESTRICTIONS ON PURPOSES FOR WHICH THEY MIGHT BE SPENT. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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